



The Ehlers e-Newsletter

For the Week of June 21, 2004

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News from Congressman Ehlers ...

SCIENCE COMMITTEE APPROVES EHLERS MANUFACTURING BILL –

Seeking to help small- and medium-sized manufacturers remain competitive, the House Science Committee Wednesday approved the Manufacturing Technology Competitiveness Act of 2004 (H.R. 3598), a bill authored by Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers.

For more information, please view the press release on our website:

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/061604ManuBillCmte.html

EHLERS LAUDS START OF PRESIDENT’S MANUFACTURING COUNCIL IN

GR – Congressman Vernon J. Ehlers Tuesday praised the introduction of the Bush Administration’s new Manufacturing Council in Grand Rapids, saying the panel will provide new focus on and understanding of the issues that affect the manufacturing sector of the economy.

For more information, please view the press release on our website:

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/061504MaufacturingCouncil.html

EHLERS INTRODUCES NOAA ORGANIC ACT – Environment, Technology, and Standards Subcommittee Chairman Vernon Ehlers Monday introduced an organic act for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which would clarify and codify the agency’s authority and responsibilities.

For more information, please view the press release on our website:

http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/mi03_ehlers/061504NOAAOrganic.html

THIS WEEK IN THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MONDAY, JUNE 21, 2004

On Monday, the House will meet at 12:30 p.m. for morning hour and 2 p.m. for legislative business. Votes will be postponed until 6:30 p.m.

Suspensions (14 bills):

(Bills on suspension are generally considered non-controversial and have reduced debate time, but require a two-thirds majority vote to be passed.)

- 1) **H.Res. 591 - Expressing the gratitude of the House of Representatives for the contributions made by America’s community banks to the Nation’s economic**

well-being and prosperity and the sense of the House of Representatives that a month should be designated as “Community Banking Month”

- 2) **H.R. 4471 - Homeownership Opportunities for Native Americans Act of 2004:** Amends the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 to require federal guarantees for tribal housing activities to guarantee repayment of 95 percent of the unpaid principal and interest due on the notes or other obligations.
- 3) **H.R. 4363 - Helping Hands for Homeownership Act of 2004:** Makes a technical correction to the Housing Opportunity Program Extension Act of 1996 to allow families who receive homes from groups such as Habitat for Humanity (Habitat) and the Housing Assistance Council (HAC) to fulfill the “sweat equity” requirement for receiving Self-Help Homeownership Opportunity Program (SHOP) funds not only by helping to build their own homes, but also by helping to build other self-help homes in the community. H.R. 4363 will achieve this technical change by striking the word “dwelling” and replacing it with “dwellings” at paragraph (1) of section 11(b) of the Housing Opportunity Program Extension Act of 1996 (42 U.S.C. 12805 note).
- 4) **S. 2238 - Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2004:** Amends the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 to extend the national flood insurance program’s authorization through September 30, 2008. The bill establishes a pilot program for mitigation of severe repetitive loss properties. Authorizes the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide financial assistance to States and communities for taking actions to mitigate flood damage to such properties and losses to the National Flood Insurance Fund from such properties. It sets forth provisions regarding: (1) eligible activities (activities to reduce flood damages and to purchase such properties); and (2) matching fund requirements. Provides for increased premiums of up to 150 percent of the current chargeable rate in cases of refusal to mitigate.
- 5) **H.R. 3751 - To require that the Office of Personnel Management study and present options under which dental and vision benefits could be made available to Federal employees and retirees and other appropriate classes of individuals**
- 6) **H.R. 3797 - 2004 District of Columbia Omnibus Authorization Act:** Amends the District of Columbia Home Rule Act to require the Board of Education, by March 1 of each year or the date on which the Mayor of the District of Columbia makes the proposed annual budget for a year available (whichever occurs later), to submit to the District Council a plan for the allocation of the Mayor’s proposed budget among various object classes and responsibility centers. Specifies the content of such plan. The bill amends the District of Columbia Code to authorize the District’s Executive Officer, under certain conditions, to enter into: (1) a contract for procurement of severable services in the same manner and to the same extent as the head of an executive agency may enter into such a contract under the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949; (2) a lease agreement for the accommodation of the District of Columbia courts in a building which is in existence or being erected by the lessor to accommodate them; and (3) a multiyear contract for the acquisition of property or services in the same manner

and to the same extent as an executive agency may enter into such a contract under the act.

- 7) **H.R. 4222 - Newell George Post Office Building Designation Act** (*Kansas City, Kansas*)
- 8) **H.Con.Res. 450 - Recognizing the 40th anniversary of the day civil rights organizers Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner gave their lives in the struggle to guarantee the right to vote for every citizen of the United States and encouraging all Americans to observe the anniversary of the deaths of the 3 men by committing themselves to ensuring equal rights, equal opportunities, and equal justice for all people**
- 9) **H.Res. 679 - Congratulating the Detroit Pistons on winning the 2004 NBA Championship**
- 10) **H.Res. 660 - Congratulating Randy Johnson of the Arizona Diamondbacks on pitching a perfect game on May 18, 2004**
- 11) **H.R. 884 - Western Shoshone Claims Distribution Act:** Provides for the use and distribution of the funds awarded to the Western Shoshone identifiable group under Indian Claims Commission Docket Numbers 326-A-1, 326-A-3, and 326-K, and for other purposes. H.R. 884 provides for the use and distribution of the awards (referenced by certain docket numbers). When a hearing on the bill was held on June 18, 2003, the amount of the judgment funds was estimated to be approximately \$143.9 million, including interest. Using this figure, under H.R. 884 \$142,472,644 will be paid to eligible Western Shoshones on a per capita share basis. The remaining \$1,386,718 would be used for an education trust fund for the benefit of the Western Shoshone Indians.
- 12) **H.R. 3846 - Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004:** Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement or contract with Indian tribes meeting certain criteria to carry out projects to protect Indian forest land.
- 13) **S. 1848 - To amend the Bend Pine Nursery Land Conveyance Act to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to sell the, Bend Pine Nursery Administration Site in the State of Oregon**
- 14) **H.R. 3706 - John Muir National Historic Site Boundary Adjustment Act:** Located in Martinez, California, the Site preserves the 14 room mansion where naturalist John Muir lived from 1890 to his death in 1914. The JMNHS is 344 acres and had 28,206 visitors in 2001.

TUESDAY, JUNE 22, 2004

On Tuesday, the House will meet at 9 a.m. for morning hour and 10 a.m. for legislative business.

Suspensions (10 bills):

- 1) **H.Con.Res. 13 - Recognizing the importance of blues music:** (1) recognizes the importance of blues music with respect to many cultural developments in United States history; (2) calls on the people of the United States to take the opportunity to study, reflect on, and celebrate the importance of the blues; and (3) requests that the President issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States

and interested organizations to observe the importance of the blues with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and educational programs.

- 2) **H.Con.Res. 449 - Honoring the life and accomplishments of Ray Charles, recognizing his contributions to the nation, and extending condolences to his family on his death**
- 3) **H.Res. 634 - Congratulating the Kenyon College Ladies swimming and diving team for winning the 2004 NCAA Division III Women`s Swimming and Diving National Championship**
- 4) **H.Res. 635 - Congratulating the Kenyon College Lords swimming and diving team for winning the 2004 NCAA Division III Men`s Swimming and Diving National Championship**
- 5) **H.Res. 630 - Commending the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers for winning the 2003-04 NCAA Division I National Collegiate Women`s Ice Hockey Championship**
- 6) **H.Con.Res. 56 - Expressing the sense of the Congress that States should require candidates for driver`s licenses to demonstrate an ability to exercise greatly increased caution when driving in the proximity of a potentially visually impaired individual**
- 7) **S. 2017 - Luis A. Ferre United States Courthouse and Post Office Building Designation Act (*Ponce, Puerto Rico*)**
- 8) **H.R. 4226 - Cape Town Treaty Implementation Act of 2004:** Amends title 49, United States Code, to make certain conforming changes to provisions governing the registration of aircraft and the recordation of instruments to implement the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment and the Protocol to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment on Matters Specific to Aircraft Equipment, known as the "Cape Town Treaty."
- 9) **H.R. 4372 - Working Families Assistance Act of 2004:** Allows for taxpayers to roll over \$500 to next year`s Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA). Under the current system, up to \$5,000 can be withheld by an employer and place into a Dependent Care FSA. Unfortunately, the way the accounts are structured, if the employee doesn`t use all of the money placed into the account, they lose it. This bill allows people some flexibility with their own money by offering them the option of rolling over up to \$500 into next year`s Dependent Care FSA.
- 10) **H.R. 4589 - To reauthorize the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant program through September 30, 2004:** Extends through September 30, 2004 the program of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which is currently authorized only through June 30, 2004. The extension will continue TANF grants to states, territories, and Indian tribes, supplemental grants provided to certain states, as well as other related provisions. It also will extend funding for mandatory child care, abstinence education, and transitional medical assistance (TMA) for this period. By continuing certain programs not included in the baseline, this bill will cost \$209 million over the 2004-2009 period, which is well within the House-passed budget for welfare programs.

H.R. 4613 - Department of Defense Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005:

Provides a total of \$416.9 billion in new discretionary spending authority for the

Department of Defense for FY 2005. This amount includes \$25 billion requested by the President for early fiscal year 2005 costs associated with operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. The remaining \$391.1 billion reflects an increase of \$24.3 billion over amounts provided in the fiscal year 2004 Defense Appropriations Act. The bill is \$900 million less than the Presidents request and \$48.6 billion above the FY04 sum.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, AND THE BALANCE OF THE WEEK

On Wednesday and Thursday, the House will meet at 10 a.m. On Friday, the House will meet at 9 a.m.

Suspensions (5 bills):

1) H.R. 4053 - United States International Leadership Act of 2004: Directs the President, through the Secretary of State and the relevant U.S. chiefs of mission, to seek to establish a democracy caucus at the United Nations (UN), the UN Human Rights Commission, the UN Conference on Disarmament, and at other broad-based international organizations.

2) H.Res. 676 - Recognizing and honoring the 40th anniversary of congressional passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964

3) H.R. 1731 - Identity Theft Penalty Enhancement Act: Amends the Federal criminal code to establish penalties for aggravated identity theft. It prescribes sentences of two years' imprisonment for knowingly transferring, possessing, or using, without lawful authority, a means of identification of another person during and in relation to specified felony violations (including felonies relating to theft from employee benefit plans and various fraud and immigration offenses), and five years' imprisonment for knowingly taking such action during and in relation to specified felony violations pertaining to terrorist acts, in addition to the punishments provided for such felonies.

4) H.R. 218 - Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act of 2003: Amends the federal criminal code to authorize qualified law enforcement officers (including certain qualified retired officers) carrying the photographic identification issued by their governmental agency, notwithstanding state or local laws, to carry a concealed firearm. Provides that such authorization shall not supersede state laws that: (1) permit private entities to prohibit the possession of concealed firearms on their property; or (2) prohibit the possession of firearms on state or local government property. Excludes from the definition of "firearm" any machine gun, firearm silencer, or destructive device.

5) H.R. 4345 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to increase the maximum amount of home loan guaranty available under the home loan guaranty program of the Department of Veterans Affairs: *A summary of this bill was not available at time of publication.*

H.R. 4548 - Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005: *A summary of this bill was not available at time of publication.*

H.R. 3973 - Spending Control Act of 2004: Restores a system of spending control measures with the force of law, and the backing of automatic spending cuts if the controls are breached. The discipline cannot be waived; it can be altered only by enacting laws amending it.

H.R. 4614 - Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005: Provides a total of \$28.0 billion in new discretionary spending authority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Civil, the Department of Interior including the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Energy, and several Independent Agencies. This bill is \$734.5 million above fiscal year 2004 and \$49.6 million above the President's budget request.

** Possible Motions to go to Conference*

** Possible Motions to Instruct Conferees*

Historical Tidbits

On June 21 ...

1788 - The U.S. Constitution went into effect when New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it.

1938 - In Washington, U.S. President Roosevelt signed the \$3.75 billion Emergency Relief Appropriation Act.

On June 22 ...

1870 - The U.S. Congress created the Department of Justice.

1970 - U.S. President Richard Nixon signed 26th amendment, lowering the voting age to 18.

On June 23 ...

1836 - The U.S. Congress approved the Deposit Act, which contained a provision for turning over surplus federal revenue to the states.

1860 - The U.S. Secret Service was created to arrest counterfeiters.

1947 - The U.S. Senate joined the House in overriding President Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act.

On June 24 ...

1970 - The U.S. Senate voted overwhelmingly to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

On June 25 ...

1868 - The U.S. Congress enacted legislation granting an eight-hour day to workers employed by the Federal government.

1910 - The U.S. Congress authorized the use of postal savings stamps.

1986 - The U.S. Congress approved \$100 million in aid to the Contras fighting in Nicaragua.

1997 - U.S. air pollution standards were significantly tightened by U.S. President Clinton.

(Information from <http://www.on-this-day.com>)